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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2610

May 14, 1993

GATT AND MARKET ACCESS -- Technical discussions between the United States and the European Community will be held soon on the subject of market access in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. During a tour to meet with his European counterparts, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said that substantial discussions on market access must be resolved before the GATT signing. The basic aim of GATT is to liberalize world trade and place it on a more secure basis, contributing to economic growth and development. No previous round of GATT talks has been as important to U.S. agriculture, or as difficult to negotiate. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

TAKING OFFICE -- Swearing-in ceremonies were held May 12, 1993 for five individuals assuming office at USDA: Richard Rominger as deputy secretary of agriculture; Bob Nash as under secretary for small community and rural development; Eugene Branstool as assistant secretary for marketing and inspection services; James Lyons as assistant secretary for natural resources and environment; and Wardell Townsend as assistant secretary for administration. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

FARM VALUES HIGHER -- For the sixth consecutive year the per acre value of U.S. farm real estate is higher than the previous year. From a low of \$599 per acre in 1987, the average value is now \$700, increasing 2 percent last year. Values increased in all regions except the Pacific. Strongest gains, 4 percent, occurred in the Lake States, Appalachia, and Delta States. The Corn Belt and Northern Plains areas each reported a 3 percent rise. The Southern Plains averaged 2 percent higher, the first increase since 1985. **Contact: Roger Hexem (202) 219-0423.**

BOLL WEEVIL POPULATION -- Trap results indicate that the boll weevil population will be high this year. One of the major factors is the mild winter in most sections of boll weevil infestation. Higher counts have been found in fields where stalks had not been cut last fall. While the early weevils will not survive to infest squaring cotton in June, early high counts indicate that even higher counts are on the way and can be a real danger to the cotton crop. **Contact: Jack Baldwin (504) 388-2180.**

CANADA STREAMLINES WHEAT EXPORTS -- The Canadian Wheat Board is now permitting licensed agents to market grain directly to U.S. buyers, allowing buyer and seller to set price privately without Board intervention or negotiations. The objective for opening direct sales is to maximize sales to existing and new markets. While the Canadian Wheat Board continues to make direct sales to individual buyers in the United States, it has taken the action to minimize disruption of volume. The new procedure does away with exported wheat being unloaded at Board terminals, repurchased at export prices and reloaded for final shipment. These physical transactions now take place on paper. The Board maintains control over volume and data collection. **Contact: Jack Rower (202) 690-4130.**

SUNFLOWERS -- Sunflowerseed commanded a higher price in 1992/93 and farmers are expected to plant more acres to sunflowers this year, totalling 2.4 million acres, up 7 percent from a year ago. For the 1992/93 marketing year crushers will process 2.3 billion pounds of sunflowerseed to meet the growing demand for export of sunflower oil. The increased crush will result in substantial reduction of stocks, and a 12 percent boost in prices. **Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.**

DRY EDIBLE BEANS -- This coming season, U.S. producers of dry edible beans intend to plant 6 percent more acres this year for a total of 1.7 million acres. The small increase can be attributed to continued high stocks and soft prices for many classes of beans, and reduced export demand. Exports of dry beans were down 34 percent last year. **Contact: Shannon Hamm (202) 219-0886.**

MORE WHEAT AND ORANGES -- Winter wheat is expected to have an average yield of 40 bushels per acre, up 2.5 bushels from last year. Production is forecast at 1.8 billion bushels, up 13 percent. Area for harvest as grain is forecast at 44 million acres, up 6 percent. Conditions are generally good but the crop is late in its development. Orange production is forecast at 11.2 million tons, up 25 percent from last season. Florida is expected to produce 184 million boxes, up 32 percent from last season. California's orange forecast is 74 million boxes, 10 percent more than last year. **Contact: Rich Allen (202) 720-4333.**

PESTICIDE RECORDKEEPING -- USDA says that certified applicators using restricted use pesticides must meet new recordkeeping requirements. The applicator must record the location and size of the treated area, the crop or stored product, the brand of the pesticide and its EPA registration number, amount and date of application, and the applicator's name. USDA and eligible state agencies will use the information to form a data base for environmental surveys and reports to Congress. Violators can be fined up to \$1,000. **Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-8998.**

EXTENDED SHELF LIFE -- New developments in packaging are extending the shelf life of foods. An example is shrink-wrapping, it reduces the amount of oxygen available to foods. Modified atmosphere storage, a breathable plastic patch in shrink wrapping regulates the rate at which oxygen and carbon dioxide enter and leave packaged fruit and vegetables, more than doubling their shelf life. Irradiation also extends shelf life, but is somewhat more expensive than shrink wrapping. Irradiation offers benefits to foods that other methods cannot match or must use chemicals to achieve results, such as killing insects in grain, inhibiting sprouting of potatoes, and eliminating micro-organisms than can contaminate meats. **Contact: Rosanna Morrison (202) 219-0313.**

BABY BOOMERS AND MIDDLE AGE -- The greatest challenge in population profile during the 1990s will be the advent of middle age for almost all of the baby boom generation, those born between 1946 and 1962, and the diminished share of younger workers in the non metro population. A study by USDA's Economic Research Service reveals that the median age (34.1 years) of nonmetro people has risen, but that it is not greatly above that of metro residents. Nonmetro counties have a higher percentage of people at retirement age and a higher share of children ages 5 to 19. **Contact: Calvin Beale (202) 219-0535.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1875 -- Agriculture Secretary **Mike Espy** talks about his first 100 days in the top job at USDA, as well as his goal for a "new attitude" at the Agriculture Department. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1357 -- Food safety research; yogurt cultures and health; a coffee flavor explosion; from mushrooms to charamoyas; spider control. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1867 -- USDA News Highlights; the first 100 days; crop reporting; some emergency pesticide uses being revoked; crop options for Oklahoma. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1620 -- Fungi kill pear pests; new threat to grapes; making grapes virus free; grape biodiversity; dousing Africanized bees. (Weekly research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Friday, May 21, livestock/poultry update, cattle on feed; Monday, May 24, feed outlook; Tuesday, May 25, weekly weather and crop update; Wednesday, May 26, cotton/wool outlook; Thursday, May 27, export outlook, world tobacco situation; Friday, May 28, ag income outlook, ag prices. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on agricultural biotechnology and the Flavr Savr tomato; **Will Pemble** reports on the new Flame grapefruit; **Dave Luciani** of Michigan State University reports on preventing rural road accidents during the busy planting season.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA outlook chairman **James Donald** analyzes the latest crop report, and the world ag supply and demand estimates; USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** provides a U.S. crop and weather update; B-roll of swearing-in ceremony of five USDA assistant secretaries.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on a Virginia Extension project to help immigrants adapt; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on the experimental food crop purslane; **Pat O'Leary** reports on a USDA CD-ROM computer project that helps you landscape your lawn.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

SCHOOL FUNDING...is a hot issue in Iowa. **Tom Beavers** (KMA, Shenandoah, IA) says county governments are trying to provide increased funding to make up for the reduction in state funds. The state legislature is working on proposals to change the school funding formula from total reliance on property taxes to include sales tax receipts as well. Tom says many counties that are also trying to pass bond issues to improve schools are experiencing voter resistance.

WE'RE DOING VERY WELL...says **Miles Carter** (KMZU/KOAL, Carrollton, MO). Northwest Missouri is probably the only non-muddy region in the state, soil temperatures have increased, and producers are busy planting. There has been a big jump in the use of no-till. Miles says many producers are using it on 20 percent of their land, and that it has helped in the fast progress of planting. Attitudes are terrific, producers have had 2 good years and are hoping for a third good season.

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90-MINUTE SATELLITE FEED...on marketing loans for wheat and feed grains will be conducted on May 17, 7:30 p.m. CT, says **Sam Knipp** (Kansas Farm Bureau, Manhattan). The transmission will originate from the Bureau and will be available on C-band G-6, transponder 19, and Ku band, G-Star 2, Transponder 12.

AUSTRALIA...is on the travel agenda of **Orion Samuelson** (WGN/Tribune Radio Network, Chicago). He returns May 18 from a 12-day look at that nation's agricultural economy.

BIG EXPANSION...is underway for the network voice of farmers in the nation's Northeast. **Ed Slusarczyk** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY) has purchased the Agri-Broadcasting Network of Pennsylvania. The Ag Radio Network will now broadcast on 108 stations. Ed says it will cover 80% of the dairy, grain, fruit and vegetable farmers in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. **Jeff Stewart**, general manager of the network will administer the combined operation.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division